

D87-2 Contemporary Film Theory
Winter, MW 3-5, room 113
Kleinhans

The goals of the course are

- (1) to provide a basic introduction to some major trends in post-Bazin film theory and criticism for people studying contemporary theory for the first time.
- (2) to provide the student with background in primary theoretical work (sometimes not dealing with film per se) which can be used to evaluate the validity of different theoretical positions.
- (3) to understand a variety of issues being developed and debated in recent theory, particularly in three interrelated areas--marxism, particularly the concept of ideology; semiology, the linguistics-influenced science of communications; and psychoanalysis (Freudian psychology).

The course will consist of lectures providing background and analysis, readings, and group-project film analyses. Required work includes ~~use~~ attendance, six summaries of articles from an assigned bibliography (about 500 words prepared on ditto for distribution to the entire class), and a final essay exam written in class from topics given in advance.

textbooks

- Lenin, Lenin on Marx and Engels (Peking, Foreign Lang. Publishing) (China Books)
Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto (ditto)
Mao Tse-tung Four Essays on Philosophy (ditto)
Millet, Kate Sexual Politics (Avon pb)
Brecht, Bertolt, Brecht on Theatre (Hill and Wang pb)
Holland, Norman, Dynamics of Literary Response (Norton pb)
Sartre, Jean-Paul, Search For A Method (Vintage pb)
Eagleton, Terry, Marxism and Literary Criticism (California pb)
Eco, Umberto, A Theory of Semiotics (Indiana U press,)

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WEEK

- Wed Jan 4 introduction to course; survey of recent film theory
- Mon Jan 9 introduction to marxism and cultural analysis
read: Sartre, Search For A Method
- Wed Jan 11 marxism: basics
read: Lenin, "Karl Marx," and "3 Sources and 3 component Parts of Marxism"
Marx-Engels, "Communist Manifesto"
Mao-Tse-Tung, "On Practice," "On Contradiction"
- Mon Jan 16 art and ideology, 1
read: Terry Eagleton, Marxism and Literary Criticism
Lefebvre, "Ideology and the Sociology of Knowledge"
- Wed Jan 18 art and ideology, 2
read: Adorno, "The Culture Industry"
Millet, Sexual Politics (parts I and II)
Eckert, "Shirley Temple and the House of Rockefeller"
- Mon Jan 23 realism/anti-realism
read: Brecht, selections from On Theatre
Lukacs, Realism in Our Time (I & 2)
Wollen, "Countercinema: Vent d'est"
- Wed Jan 25 semiology: introduction
read: Barthes, "Myth Today" from Mythologies
Hall, "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse"
- Mon Jan 30 semiology as system: Eco
read: Eco, A Theory of Semiotics (to p. 150)
- Wed Feb 1 Eco (concluded); intro to close analysis; segment of STAGECOACH
read: Eco (to end)
Browne, "The spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of Stagecoach"
- Mon Feb 6 Metz's ~~EXAM~~ Syntagmatic Categories
read: Metz, "Some Points in the Semiotics of the Cinema" and
"Problems of Denotation in the Fiction Film"
- Wed Feb 8 LADY BE GOOD (McLeod, 41)
small group analysis of production sequences
- Mon Feb 13 presentation of group analysis of LADY BE GOOD

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- Wed Feb 15 psychoanalysis, intro.
read: Holland, pp 1-103 of The Dynamics of Literary Response
- Mon Feb 20 psychoanalysis
read: Holland, pp. 104-190
Mulvey, "Narrative Cinema and Visual Pleasure"
Hanet, summary of Bellour on North by Northwest
- Week
- Wed. Feb 22 NIGHTMARE ALLEY (Goulding, 47)
small group analysis of psychology of film
- Mon Feb 27 presentation of NIGHTMARE ALLEY analysis; coding reconsidered
read: Berger, Ways of Seeing, parts 2, 3
Mayne, "S/Z and Film Criticism"
Lesage, "S/Z and RULES OF THE GAME"
- Wed. ~~Feb~~ Mar 1 ANNE OF THE INDIES (Tourneur, 51)
Read: Johnston, "Femininity and the Masquerade"
- Mon Mar 6 synthesis and loose ends
read: Kleinhans, on SHAMPOO
- Wed Mar 8 summary and new directions